

Celebration of Thomas H. Trapp's Victory in Christ

Sermon Road Map

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Psalm 90:12

March 30, 2019

Jesus, teach us to number our days aright!

- No doubt you remember when you receive the news that Tom was dying or had died. Totally unexpected. Karen & I - at a German Restaurant with dear friends. Karen read Carol's text. My response: *Tom? Carol's Tom?*
- As we shared the news with family - similar responses.
- Ps. 90:12 kept on coming to mind. *Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*
 - ♦ The first part came to mind. The second part proved most instructive.
- The Holy Spirit gave us this Psalm through Moses - 3,500 years ago!
 - ♦ It contrasts our short lives, 70-80 years if we have the strength, to God's unending eternity - our mortality to his immortality
 - ♦ This puts everything in perspective. God is the sage. We're the students. To understand life, its brevity, and death - he **must** instruct us.
- The death of someone we know and loved presents 2 challenges:
 - ♦ They're missed - the empty place - addressed in the Children's sermon
 - ♦ Facing their death, we face our mortal - a fact easily overlooked in daily life, until we experience the lose someone
 - Ignoring our morality doesn't help and it is **not wise**.
 - Learning to pray Ps 90:12 daily or at least weekly is a healthy reminder
 - Pray, noting the **purpose** - not merely a task! We seek to gain wisdom.
- ❖ **Ask God to teach us to number your days to gain wisdom**
 - *How can I number my days, if I don't know how many there are?*
 - ♦ Not learn how to count down, but a **count up**.
 - ♦ Not an Advent Calendar counting down to Christmas. More like a POW numbering his days by making a mark on the wall, looking to go home.
 - ♦ Mark another **day** of God's **grace**, a day **to know** and serve him knowing as the hymn says: "a day's march nearer home." (CW 213:2)
 - ♦ Delighting in each day of grace while looking to go home - is wise.
 - The goal: consider each day of our morality in a way to gain true wisdom
 - ♦ Wisdom is often confused with knowledge or intelligence.
 - ♦ Wisdom sees the real reality - seeing the whole picture and how things really work - then conducts oneself accordingly.
 - ♦ Anyone who doesn't factor mortality into how they think of life, lives without seeing the whole picture. That's **NOT WISE**.
 - ♦ Face it: only God can shows us reality, the whole picture, how it works
- Only God can tell us what happens to us when we die. And He has.
 - ♦ *...the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.* Ecclesiastes 12:7
 - ♦ ²⁷ *Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,...* Hebrews 9
 - ♦ God's judgment or **basis for evaluation** is simple.
 - Those who die loving the true and living God - who though faith found him to be their dwelling place/home - will dwell with God forever.
 - Those who had other plans and had no interest in dwelling with the Holy Triune God in life, will **not dwell with him** in eternity. Their home is devoid of God - of everything good - the place called hell. This is **not** a divine **scare tactic**. It's love making reality know.
 - When you consider that both residences are **eternal** and your assignment is **permanent** - its **obvious** it is foolish to spend your life pretending that this isn't so. **Teach us to number our days aright**, is a prayer that we live for the goal - God's goal - for us to dwell with him now so we dwell with him forever.
 - ♦ ²⁷ *Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,* ²⁸ *so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.* Hebrews 9
 - We number our days the **wise way - God's way** - when we live in and for the truth that Christ was sacrificed once to take away all my sin and all the sins of every individual. (Hebrewism: *many*) **Trusting his full payment** for all my guilt and it's power to **release** me to have and live in new life with God - means my last breathe is seen as the **portal to dwell with God**. And Jesus' resurrection assures me my bodies with be raised when he returns, so I can live bodily with him forever. That's the **whole picture** that wisdom sees and lives.
- *Numbering your days* is **not living to die**, but **living to live**.
 - ♦ Wasting your days killing time to go home - is *not numbering aright*.
 - ♦ Saying: *He's do heavenly minded his is not earthly good*.
 - ♦ While some used this saying to kid Tom about his limited aptitude to fixing things - the fact is **Tom was so heavenly minded he was a world of good to many**. Tom live for others to gain the wisdom he found in Jesus Christ.

❖ **The wise live to know Jesus Christ and make him known.**

- Chapel's mission: *To know Jesus Christ and make him known on Campus.*
- This was not just a phrase or a saying. Tom understood this was **God's purpose** for his own time of grace and for everyday of every person.
- To **know him** (Jesus Christ) is **to love him** and want to dwell with him.
- The Hebrew word translated *teach* is Ya-da' here in a form meaning **to cause to know by experience** by **encountering, watching, interacting.**
- The **purpose of each day God gives us** is to meet Jesus **in his word** - so we see **daily life** through the **eyes of God's word of truth** - especially his **grace** - undeserved love. True wisdom is found in **savoring God's forgiveness and life** - walking everyday - **dwelling** in God's word.
- The more you experience God's grace and truth in daily life - so it runs from your **head**, through your **heart**, down to your **toes** - the more you **know Christ by experience** - you **dwell** with him and your **feet** are on **rock solid ground.**
 - ♦ Then **unexpected events**, like Tom's passing, **doesn't change what you know.** Events are informed by what you know. You **know** that the timing of Tom's death and victory in Christ is according to God's wisdom and perfect love - for Tom and for us. An opportunity each of us to **know Jesus even more.**
 - ♦ Our **peace** is **not** found is asking Jesus **why**, but in **asking** Jesus to help us experience his steadfast love in his word - to know him more.
 - ♦ Filled with his wisdom - **hope and life abounds** every day as we **delight dwelling** with him now and **anticipate** the **joy** when we slip from the realm of **days** into the realm of **eternity** with Jesus - just as Tom did 18 days ago.
 - ♦ **Grounded** with and **living** in this **hope** - be **ready** for others to ask what's your secret. Living with hope - ready to **see so many** who need to know what God has make know to you in Jesus. Make Jesus know on **your** campus.
 - ♦ I'm told that Tom often quoted this passage and Psalm 31:15 - *My times are in your hands.* (his *baseball* card) These verses had 2-fold function:
 - The comfort of know **where I'm living** - safe and secure with Jesus
 - Recognizing the **urgency** of sharing Jesus with others while it is day.
 - The nature of a Campus - limited time with college students - even more limited time in international offer a lesson in counting the limit of time to make Jesus known now.

- ♦ The **impact of PT** (Pastor Trapp) for this work of God - speaks not so much to Tom as to **what Tom knew and believed**: that **God's word works wonders**, and **now** is the time to let in work in **me** and in **others.**
- Just as Jesus used Tom 1 more time to seals God's personal promises to a mother and son with waters of Holy Baptism, I close with letting Tom tell you one more time what it means to know Jesus Christ. In this farewell sermon June 25, 2017 he said:

To know Christ means to know that we are **sinful** and he is **holy**, that we are **mortals** and he is **immortal.** To know Christ means to know our **guilt** is **covered** by his **grace** and our **fear** is replaced with **faith.** To know Christ means to know that in Christ we are no longer **seen as sinners** before our holy God but we are **seen as saints.** To know Christ means that **when we die**, we will **rise again.** To know Christ means to cry out: "**Lord I need you. Every hour I need you: my one defense, my righteousness. Oh God how I need you.**" (I can only imagine this, or something like this was the perpetual plea of Tom's heart for the 56 hours or so in a comma. Not a desperate cry, but a confident longing filled with peace.

Jesus, teach us all to number our days aright - that knowing you, we may live to dwell with you everyday and in all of eternity. Amen.